



(U) What's a Military Cryptologic Advisor?

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(U) On the verge of retirement, Chief Warrant Officer Price describes how his "one-off" job has been made permanent.

(U//FOUO) For almost two years now I have been serving the SIGINT Director as a Special Assistant. This began in Fall 2003, when I had been serving as the Senior Technical Advisor for the Army Technical Control and Analysis Element here for six years, and decided it was time to give someone else an "opportunity to excel" in that position. As an Army Chief Warrant Officer Five in the SIGINT field, there is generally no requirement for periodic PCS*, which accounts for the long tenure.

(U//FOUO) I asked MG Quirk if I could come to work for him in SID. After all, the Army's definition of a CW5 is that he or she is a technical advisor to a policy-level officer. MG Quirk's response was, "Sure." And that was about the extent of my job description! I always assumed that this assignment was a personal one, that would go away whenever I did move on, but when I told the SID Director that I was retiring, he told me that he wanted a replacement, that he felt the job was an important one that should be continued.

(U//FOUO) When I began working for MG Quirk, my "charter" was primarily to help him work special projects with a focus on military matters, so I adopted the title "Special Assistant for Military Affairs." The position has always been a little vague, but I have tried to build it into a personal "bridge" between the SIGINT Directorate, and the SCEs*, the local SCE unit commanders, and the Services, but without co-opting and roles, responsibilities, or authorities from any of the existing SID and NSA organizations, and relationships with those entities. That was a tall order, and perhaps I've not been as successful as I (or others) would have liked, but hopefully I helped in some small way.

(U//FOUO) MG Quirk's initial marching orders were for me, his then-Military Exec Lt Col [REDACTED], and the SID Senior Enlisted Leader SGM [REDACTED] to help "improve civilian-military relations in SID." He told us that he did not want us to work up a detailed study that might brief well, but would quickly become "shelfware." Consequently, we interviewed dozens of people in SID, in the SCE offices, local units, and at two Cryptologic Centers, in order to identify areas that could be improved, and have worked behind the scenes since then to take concrete steps toward that improvement. For example, I believe that SGM [REDACTED] has made great strides in improving the military assignment process within SID for military personnel, and continues to work in that area.

(U//FOUO) Perhaps one of our greatest victories came when a DOD Validation and Assessment Board came to NSA to examine all military billets. Their stated mission was to identify positions and jobs that could be done by civilians rather than people in uniform, with an eye towards freeing up military end-strength towards new combat and combat support units. At first glance, one could easily argue that jobs being done in air-conditioned offices do not need to be done by someone in uniform, and it was apparent that the DOD VAB might well take that stance. But we successfully explained to them that excluding military service members from serving at the Fort Meade Headquarters would cripple our partnerships and enterprise. The result was that the Board validated almost all SID billets with only a few minor exceptions.

(U//FOUO) Such activities are things that SID and SCE leadership certainly would have achieved great success with or without my participation. But I hope that my work from this position helped to enable even better communication between SID leadership and SID's military partners, be those the SCE offices, our local commanders, or the "big Services." And I always

tried to be an "open ear" for our deployed SIGINTers, civilian and military alike, when they needed help finding a solution to a thorny problem, or just a bit of encouragement when things looked bad. Perhaps the most important, if sad, thing was to help alert NSA leadership to the passing of two SIGINT Soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq, so they could be properly commemorated on the Wall of Honor.

(U//FOUO) The fact that MG Quirk now feels the position is important enough to keep is reward enough to me. We re-dubbed it "**Military Cryptologic Advisor**," and **CW4** [REDACTED] will assume that position this week. He has a great deal of unique experience working within SID and its predecessor organization the Directorate of Operations on Support to Military Operations, and comes most recently from a tour in CSG Baghdad. I know that he will work even harder to keep those communications going, and facilitate MG Quirk's goal of a Global Cryptologic Integration Center.

(U//FOUO) Meanwhile, I will hang up the uniform after 35 years, and reflect on the great SID team that it has been my honor to serve with at the end of my career.

*(U) Notes:

SCE = Service Cryptologic Element

PCS = Permanent Change of Station

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